

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

H-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01

OMB-01 PRS-01 EB-07 /071 W
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R 170915Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1525

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 6141

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: DECLASSIFY JANUARY 1, 1977

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJ: THE YELLOW PERIL: POST SCRIPT ON OTHER SHIBBOLETHS

REF: MANILA 12240

1. BEFORE I BESTIRRED MYSELF AND GOT TO THE CODE ROOM WITH MY COMMENTS, MY COLLEAGUES AND THE DEPARTMENT HAD SAID EVERYTHING THAT NEEDED TO BE SAID ABOUT AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S SECOND EVOKING OF THE YELLOW PERIL. IN MOST RESPECTS MY VIEWS ON THE SHAPE OF SOUTH EAST ASIA AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO ABOUT IT WERE ALREADY IN KL 2447 OF MAY 6. IN THIS MESSAGE I'D LIKE TO OFFER MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRE-COM MEETING
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EXCHANGES BY SETTING DOWN SOME THOUGHTS ON THE WORDS WE

USE TO STATE AND DETERMINE POLICY OBJECTIVES.

2. OUR PROFESSION, LIKE EVERY OTHER, HAS ITS CANT, ITS SHIBBOLETHS, ITS BUZZ WORDS THAT THROUGH PERSISTENT, UNCRITICAL, SLOPPY USE LOSE THEIR MEANING AND IMPRISON US, UNKNOWNING, IN OUR OWN JARGON. WE CONTINUE TO INVOKE THESE TERMS, BUT WE BECOME THE ONLY PEOPLE PERSUADED BY THEM. IN A DEMOCRACY THIS IS DANGEROUS, BECAUSE FOREIGN POLICY RESTS ON A BASE OF PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT, AND WE LOSE THIS UNDERSTANDING AT OUR AND THE NATION'S PERIL.

3. "STABILITY," AS AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN HAS POINTED OUT (MANILA 14166) IS ONE OF THESE WORDS. WE HAVE BEEN SLOW TO REALIZE THAT CERTAIN LEVELS OF DISORDER AND ORGANIZED, CONTROLLED CONFLICT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR TRUE POLITICAL STABILITY. IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT EXIST IN THE POLITICAL EQUIVALENT OF THE OMINOUSLY QUIET PRESSURE COOKER ON A HOT STOVE WITH THE VENT AND THE SAFETY VALVE PLUGGED SHUT. IN SOUTH EAST ASIA STABILITY HAS BECOME A LARGELY RETROSPECTIVE CONCEPT -- THE WAY THINGS WERE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THEY BLEW UP, (E.G. BANGKOK IN SEPTEMBER 1973).

4. "INFLUENCE" IS ANOTHER SUCH TERM. WE HAVE FALLEN INTO THE ERROR OF THINKING THAT AID PROGRAMS, MAP, BASES, AND TROOP PRESENCE GIVE US INFLUENCE. IT DOES SO, OF COURSE, UP TO A POINT, IN AN ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE FAVORS, IF NOTHING MORE. BUT THE LEADERS IN CLIENT STATE SOON SEE THAT THEY NEED TO CONCEDE RELATIVELY LITTLE. THEY PERCEIVE THAT WE WANT THEM TO APPEAR TO BE INDEPENDENT AND SELF-ACTIVATING. THEY SEE THAT WE ARE A LAWYER-RIDDEN SOCIETY, AND THEY LEARN TO LEAVE US HELPLESS AND FRUSTRATED BY TYING UP ANYTHING THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO DO IN THE MACHINERY OF THEIR "CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS."

5. WE BECOME OFTEN MORE INFLUENCED THAN INFLUENCING. BASES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRMS TAKE ON A MOMENTUM AND SELF-JUSTIFYING LIFE OF THEIR OWN. AID OFFICIALS WANT TO MAINTAIN AID PROGRAMS; AMBASSADORS WANT TO PRESIDE OVER LARGE, ACTIVE, "INVOLVED" MISSIONS, AND THESE HUMAN FACTORS GIVE RECIPIENT NATIONS CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE IN GETTING WHAT THEY WANT FROM US.

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6. WE SEE THE INFLUENCE GENERATED BY PATRONAGE AS A RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL THAT MUST BE ADDED TO AND SAFEGUARDED. BUT WHEN WE COME TO DRAW ON IT THE RESERVOIR, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, HAS DISAPPEARED LIKE A MIRAGE. IF IT ISN'T "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME RECENTLY," OR "YES, BUT AT THE FOLLOWING PRICE," IT IS "I HAVE TO PRESERVE MY SELF-RESPECT AND SHOW THE WORLD I AM NOT YOUR PUPPET BY SPITTING IN YOUR EYE."

7. WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES, "INFLUENCE TO DO WHAT?"
UNTIL IT PRODUCES SOMETHING IT ISN'T INFLUENCE. SMALL
COUNTRIES WITH RELATIVELY FEW, NARROW OBJECTIVES ARE AT A
CONSIDERABLE ADVANTAGE OVER A LARGE COUNTRY WITH MANY
DIFFERENT OBJECTIVES. STATE MAY BE SENDING A COUNTRY UP TO
BED WITHOUT ANY DINNER BECAUSE IT HASN'T LIVED UP TO AN AIR
TRANSPORT AGREEMENT (FOR EXAMPLE) WHILE AID OR DEFENSE IS
SENDING UP A PLATE OF SANDWICHES IN THE FORM OF SOME NEW
PROGRAM DELIVERY. AWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS FROM THE UNITED
STATES ARE CAPRICIOUS BECAUSE SO MANY AGENCIES CAN ACT
INDEPENDENTLY IN MATTERS AFFECTING FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND
THE PRESSURE WE MIGHT EXERCISE IS USUALLY DISPERSED.

8. THE UNITED STATES IS OF COURSE TREMENDOUSLY INFLUENTIAL,
BUT MOST OFTEN IN WAYS THAT WE CAN NEITHER MANIPULATE NOR
CONTROL. WE ARE TODAY AN IMPORTANT SUBVERSIVE FORCE IN
SOUTH EAST ASIA. THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO
HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN OUR UNIVERSITIES OVER THE PAST TWO
DECADES HAVE RETURNED HOME PERSUADED THAT DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS
ARE NOT ONLY DESIRABLE, BUT VITALLY NECESSARY. MANY OF THEM
ARE THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE RULING ELITE, AND THEY ARE
CHALLENGING THE AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES OF THEIR PARENTS. WE
ARE OFTEN ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BARRICADES, HAVING PROVIDED
IDEALS TO ONE AND TRAINING AND TRUNCHEONS TO THE OTHER.

9. WE HAVE SET THE LIFE STYLE THAT THE ASIAN BUSINESSMAN
AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IS STRIVING TO EQUAL WHEN HE ENGAGES
IN CORRUPTION. HE HAS SEEN THE HOMES, THE WARDROBES, THE
OFFICES, THE BOARD ROOMS, THE GOLF COURSES, THE YACHT
CLUBS, THE MOUNTAIN LODGES, THE PRIVATE JETS OF OUR CAPTAINS
OF INDUSTRY, AND HE IS DETERMINED TO GO FIRST CLASS TOO.

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1526
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 6141

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

10. TRUE INFLUENCE CANNOT BE BOUGHT OR COMMANDEERED.
IT COMES FROM A SHARED PERCEPTION OF COMMON PRINCIPLES AND
GOALS AND IS SHOWN IN VOLUNTARY EMULATION OF ADMIRER BEHAVIOR.
THE U.S. IS MOST INFLUENTIAL WHEN ITS ACTIONS ARE MOST
CONSISTENT WITH ITS IDEALS.

11. "ACCESS" IS ANOTHER TERM GAINING CURRENCY. IT IS ARGUED
THAT WE SHOULD BE READY TO PAY A PRICE TO GAIN ENTREE TO A
RULING ELITE, OR TO ASSURE A CONTINUED SUPPLY OF
SOME IMPORTANT RAW MATERIAL. IN THE LATTER INSTANCE, IT
IS SAID THAT WE SHOULD BUY THE COMMODITY TWICE, -- ONCE AT
ITS MARKET PRICE AND A SECOND TIME IN THE FORM OF MILITARY
OR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THIS PREMISE IS QUESTIONABLE.
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VIRTUALLY NO DOOR TODAY IS CLOSED TO THE AMERICAN WITH THE
FAT CHECKBOOK. IT IS ACCESS TO OUR BUYERS, ACCESS TO OUR
MARKETS, THAT THE WORLD WANTS.

12. THE RATIONALE FOR OUR MILITARY POLICY IN SOUTH EAST
ASIA ABOUNDS IN STOCK WORDS, AND "THREAT", "SECURITY," AND
"STRATEGIC" ARE THREE HARDY CHESTNUTS. WE CONFUSE OUR LISTENERS
BY USING THESE TRANSITIVE TERMS INTRANSITIVELY. WE ARE NOT
SPECIFIC ABOUT THE PRECISE NATURE OF THE THREAT. WE DO NOT
DEFINE WHAT WE MEAN TO SECURE FROM WHAT DANGER. WE DO NOT STATE
THE STRATEGY THAT MAKES THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC. WHEN WE DO ATTEMPT
TO DEFINE THE THREAT, A COROLLARY OF PARKINSON'S LAW SEEMS
TO OPERATE. THE THREAT ADJUSTS TO SLIGHTLY EXCEED THE RESOURCES
AVAILABLE TO MEET IT. CAPABILITIES DETERMINE THE THREAT,
NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

13. WE PLAN, APPARENTLY, TO KEEP OUR BASES IN SOUTH EAST
ASIA, BUT WE APPEAR UNABLE TO ANSWER CLEARLY AND PRECISELY

THE QUESTION, "BASES TO DO WHAT?" THE BEST WE SEEM ABLE TO COME UP WITH IS THE PACK-RAT ARGUMENT: "AS LONG AS WE HAVE THEM, LET'S KEEP THEM. THEY MAY COME IN HANDY SOME DAY." THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY A BAD ARGUMENT, AND AS MY WIFE WILL ATTEST, I AM STRONGLY INCLINED TO IT IN OTHER CONTEXTS. BUT ARE THE COSTS, BOTH BUDGETARY AND POLITICAL WORTH IT? WOULD WE BE TRYING TO ESTABLISH THEM IF THEY WEREN'T THERE ALREADY? A FURTHER RELATED OBSERVATION: WE ARE DISPOSED TO GIVE GREATER IMPORTANCE TO THE MECHANISM THAN TO ITS PRODUCT, -- THE CAMERA, RATHER THAN THE PICTURE; THE HI-FI RIG RATHER THAN THE MUSIC; THE CAR RATHER THAN WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE. ARE WE LETTING THE SHINING EFFICIENCY OF THE INSTRUMENT OBSCURE THE FACT THAT IT HAS LOST ITS UTILITY AND APPLICABILITY?

14. WE HAVE NOT MADE A PERSUASIVE CASE FOR OUR INDIAN OCEAN POLICY. NEO-MAHANIAN PHRASES ABOUT POTENTIALLY HOSTILE FORCES "LYING ATHWART LIFE LINES READY TO CHOK OFF THE FLOW OF ESSENTIAL RAW MATERIALS" IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. SHORT OF A GENERAL WAR SITUATION, WHAT WOULD THE SOVIET GUNBOAT DO AFTER IT HAS STOPPED THE FIRST GREEK SUPERTANKER CARRYING SAUDI OIL FOR JAPAN. DOES IT SINK THE TANKER, ORDER IT BACK TO THE PERSIAN GULF, PUT ON A PRIZE CREW AND TAKE IT TO DJIBOUTI? WHAT POSSIBLE SOVIET DEMAND ON JAPAN COULD BE FURTHERED BY

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SUCH A TACTIC? WHAT WOULD ARAB, PRC, ASEAN REACTION BE?

15. THE FOREGOING EXAMPLES ARE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE MY POINT. WE SHOULD BE LOOKING CRITICALLY AT ALL OF THE BASIC PREMISES THAT THROUGH THE PAST TWO DECADES WE HAVE ACCEPTED AS GIVEN. WE SHOULD GO BEHIND THE CANT WORDS OF OUR PROFESSION TO BE SURE THAT THEY HAVE SUBSTANCE AND MEANING THAT WILL PERSUADE THE MUCH CONDESCENDED-TO PERSON IN THE STREET IN PEORIA AND KEOKUK THAT WE ARE DEALING RATIONALLY WITH THE REAL WORLD.

UNDERHILL

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